peasant who brought them back had told everyone about the convention and the meeting in the Chorino school. The headman of the village summoned the schoolteacher to the community house. Interrogated by the priest, the driver testified that an oath was administered to Chorino peasants but he could not tell who the new Tsar was. The teacher admitted that a convention of teachers and a meeting of peasants had been held at Chorino but denied the oath story. The priest ordered the girl to repeat what was said about God and the Christian faith in Chorino, and became very angry when she declared that these topics had not been discussed at all. Then somebody said that strikers threatened to burn churches in villages refusing to take an oath to the new Tsar. The headman ordered the girl to go home and await the community's decision, but she was so frightened that she ran to the factory teacher. Both girls were too proud to seek protection from the factory management or the workers.

The girls sobbed and laughed as they told their story. Now, with our arrival, everything would be straightened out, we would explain to the peasants, they would understand. . . . We decided to call a joint meeting of peasants and factory workers. The factory teacher went to announce the meeting to the workers; Lazar went off to invite, first, the village headman and the priest and then all the peasants, knocking at the door of each house. He returned fully satisfied with the success of his mission. The peasants, he reported, seemed to be interested in the meeting. The headman accepted the invitation. Only the priest declined to come. "Why should I go to the school?" he told Lazar. "Tell them to come to my church to confess their sins."

The schoolteachers gave us tea and sandwiches, and at eight o'clock we all went to the classroom. The entire male population of the village—about a hundred men—was there, with the headman in the front row. The factory workers did not mix with the peasants but formed a separate group in the corner. There were perhaps thirty of them, dressed exactly as workers in St. Petersburg dressed for a solemn occasion, with blue or red shirts under their coats, their trousers stuffed into high boots.

The workers and most of the peasants listened with visible interest to our talk on the Constituent Assembly, the Manifesto, and land, but the faces of the headman and other men in the front row remained grim. When I invited the audience to ask questions, the headman replied, "Why should we ask questions? It is enough that we have listened to how you cheat the people!" He got up, turned to the audience, and said with authority, "Faithful Christians! Should we wait until they force us to take the oath to the new Tsar of theirs?